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Backlash Against Diversity?
Identity and Cultural Politics
In European Cities

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Backlash Against Diversity? Identity and Cultural Politics in European Cities[1]

Abstract

The paper discusses four 'visions' of the contemporary ethnically plural city under conditions of globalisation and transnationalism. These 'visions', which in various ways are found in academic writing, political and social policy debates, and in contemporary literature and film, might be described as models, ideal types, scenarios, trajectories, or options which envision how such cities, whose populations are ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse, are or might be, should or should not be. Three of these visions (of the city as the site, respectively, of 'assimilation', 'integration', or 'multiculturalism', and 'separatism') have in varying degrees been found wanting, but contemporary criticism of 'multiculturalism' in Europe and North America suggests there is now a 'backlash' against diversity and difference and a desire to return to older 'assimilative' models of the city. Yet the reality, in a globalised and transnational world, is that the city is a site of a fourth vision, of 'mixity', one that many people find deeply disturbing. The paper ends by asking what might be said about the governance of the plural, ethnically heterogeneous, city under conditions of globalisation and mass transnational migration, in the light of these cultural transformations.

Keywords

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Introduction

It has long been recognised that cities and heterogeneity - economic, occupational, ethnic, 'racial', cultural, linguistic, social, indeed almost any form of heterogeneity one might name - go together. For several generations of urban sociologists this has been one of the city's defining characteristics, perhaps even the most important. This paper does not consider all those different forms of heterogeneity, nor indeed every kind of heterogeneous city. The plural cities discussed here are those produced by the eras of mass, voluntary or forced, migration that the world experienced in the 19th and 20th centuries, and which in heightened fashion characterise the contemporary epoch. The city as object of inquiry has long been, and remains controversial, not least because the city is not a neatly bounded entity (see Grillo 2000: 957). Globalisation and the transnationalisation of social, economic and political relations (and, of course, culture) mean that many cities across the globe (perhaps all) are nowadays becoming increasingly 'porous' (Taylor 1994). If a city is, as urban studies argues, a space, a site, a location, it is one which is finite but unbounded. The enclosed, secure, walled city, still a potent metaphor and ideal in many countries, is no longer an attainable reality. Yet, social scientists should not become overexcited by globalisation and transnationalism. Their importance is without question, though neither they nor their impact are homogeneous phenomena, and though the city's porosity means it cannot be treated as an isolated entity, it does not mean that the city vanishes as a unit of enquiry. Cities are unbounded, but finite in that often (though not always) they are, and indeed may be defined as, units of governance. As such they have rules, regulations, and institutions, and personnel working them, and these will have profound effects on the nature of the city's diversity, and perhaps vice versa. At this point, contemporary visions of transnational urbanism (e.g. Smith 2001) intersect with older views of the city as the location of power and site of institutional practice, and this is one way of bringing politics (local, national, global) into our analyses (Grillo 2001b).

There are, then, three aspects of the contemporary polyethnic city which claim attention: its diversity, its porosity, its governance and, a key question that needs to be asked, is what can we say about the governance of the plural,

ethnically heterogeneous, city under conditions of globalisation and mass transnational migration? More specifically, if it is agreed that diversity is to be accepted and 'recognised', in Taylor's (1994) sense, then how much, when, and where, and how might such recognition be negotiated, are important issues that remain to be resolved.

As a first step let me identify, for purposes of discussion, four ways in which diversity in the city has been envisioned: Assimilation; Integration; Separatism; and Mixity. These are at the same time 'models of' and 'models for', and may be thought of (from different perspectives) as visions, projects, ideal types, orientations, scenarios, narratives, perhaps trajectories, and maybe options. Under certain circumstances they may also become modes of governance of diversity. For institutional actors in countries such as Britain, Spain, France, Italy, the USA, Canada or Australia, the first three have represented actual or potential policy directions, and certainly as scenarios they have typically informed much policy discussion, and continue to do so. (I do not think that, as yet, 'mixity' has become a mode of governance!) For others they might denote narratives or projects through which they describe themselves, debate whence they have come and whither they might go. As such, implicitly or explicitly they are present in the background of many contemporary films, novels, and plays. Sometimes these visions or projects will be widely shared across a society as a whole, but more likely a multiplicity will be in play. Some actors may have a clear-cut vision; many more will, consciously or not, be sifting through them, uncertain about what to do for the best, shifting from one to another as circumstances, personal and collective, change. This applies equally to officialdom, authority and policy. Various branches of the state may have different policies and projects, and national, regional and local states different ends. Moreover, there may be a divergence between what the state proposes and what reality disposes. The powers that be may think they are heading in one direction when what is happening on the ground is quite the opposite.

Let me explore the first three of these visions or models in more detail, to identify what each says about diversity and proposes to do about it. In brief, *assimilation* was historically the predominant model for the city. Latterly this became *integration,* but concerns about this model, including worries that it

might turn into one of *separatism* have caused a 'backlash against diversity' (Grillo 2002) and a desire to return to an earlier model of *assimilation*. The reality on the ground, however, is of ever-increasing *mixity*, and this has implications for the nature of intercultural dialogue in the plural city.

Envisioning urban diversity

Assimilation

> 'Every effort should be bent toward an Americanization which will mean that there will be no "German-Americans", no "Italian quarters", no "East Side Jews" … but that we are one people in ideals, rights and privileges' (Frances Kellor, 1915, cited in Hartmann 1948: 114).

For much of the 19th and 20th centuries the principal, official way of dealing with ethnic diversity was to abolish it. Nation-states sought to 'nationalise' their regions, and from the late 19th century onwards, to 'assimilate' immigrants. In fact, in Britain, France and the USA there were widespread doubts whether certain immigrants from Central, Eastern and Southern Europe and from Asia, thought to be of different 'racial stock', cultural heritage, and religion (e.g. Jews, Italians, Chinese, people of colour, people of colonial origin) should be admitted. Their way of life, 'racial' identity etc. seemed to make them unalterably Other, and therefore 'unassimilable'. Many people, however, accepted they might be granted entry, e.g. as refugees from persecution, or because their labour was needed for burgeoning industries, but they had to become assimilated (e.g. 'Americanized'), and given assistance to do so.

Between 1880 and 1930 some 28 million immigrants entered the USA and during this period there was a significant shift in the source of incomers with a surge in immigration from Central, Eastern and Southern Europe. In the early years of the twentieth century the movement to ensure their proper Americanization was led by East coast business and civic leaders who promoted the inculcation of the English language and American civic ideals. This movement became a campaign which reached its height during World War I. The initial vehicle for the campaign was the North American Civic League for Immigrants

which brought together a number of powerful bankers, industrialists and merchants who were particularly concerned with the rising support for militant trade unionism (Hartmann 1948). The League promoted training in the English language and civics, and also advocated naturalization. With the outbreak of World War I the latter was seen as an urgent priority, and in 1915, through the agency of the National Americanization Day Committee, plans were made to make July 4th of that year 'a day of significance in the relations existing between native and foreign-born Americans' (Hartmann 1948: 115). The campaign, which had presidential backing, was well thought out, well organized, and well funded, drawing support from a wide range of private and civic institutions. With their assistance it circulated over 50,000 posters, and the day itself was celebrated in 150 cities. As well as providing opportunities to rejoice in the virtues of acquiring American citizenship, the Committee placed great stress on the proper preparation for naturalization, especially the need to learn English: 'English Language First' was a key slogan. To this end it worked through both State Education Boards and the private sector, especially industry, e.g. the Ford factory in Detroit. There were three million naturalizations between 1908 and 1930, but whether these were stimulated by the campaign is difficult to determine. In all probability, the most important vehicle of Americanization was the public school system (Greer 1972).

Although the US example is interesting because of the explicitness of the Americanization campaign, similar policies were followed in countries such as France and Britain, despite widespread misgivings about the assimilability of certain populations. There was also, in the American case certainly, ambiguity about the hoped for outcome of assimilation. As Milton Gordon's influential account of *Assimilation in American Life* (1964) asked, did the famous metaphor of America as a 'melting pot' mean that the citizen emerging from the process of Americanization would be someone who conformed to the norms of the Anglo-Saxon heritage, adopting the prevailing culture of an existing society, grounded in the values of the 'Founding Fathers' (what Gordon called 'Anglo-conformity'); or did it mean an amalgam of that and other traditions, blending together existing values with others in a new 'American' identity?

Integration and Multiculturalism

> 'Integration is perhaps a rather loose word. I do not regard it as meaning the loss, by immigrants, of their own national characteristics and culture. I do not think we need in this country a "melting pot", which will turn everybody out in a common mould, as one of a series of carbon copies of someone's misplaced vision of the stereotyped Englishman ... I define integration, therefore, not as a flattening process of assimilation but as equal opportunity, coupled with cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance' (Jenkins 1967: 267).

By the mid-to-late 20th century, however, programmes of assimilation of the classic kind were increasingly hard to sustain (Grillo 1998). Attention turned, therefore, to policies of what were called in Europe 'integration' (though other terms were also used), and in the USA (and later in Europe) 'cultural pluralism' or more usually 'multiculturalism'. 'Integration' is a difficult term. The word occurs widely across European languages, though not always signalling the same thing (see Favell 1998): sometimes it is virtually interchangeable with assimilation. In Britain, however, it acquired a specific meaning through a formulation worked out in the 1960s in the Home Office under the then Labour Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins. What the 'Jenkins formula' (Rex 1995: 80-1), cited above, foresaw for immigrants (and the next generation of what were called 'ethnic minorities', and then 'minority ethnics'), was not assimilation in the traditional sense, but acculturation in many areas of life, at any rate in the *public sphere.* There would be a common public sphere of shared norms and values with equal opportunity in employment, housing, education and health/welfare systems; equality before the law; and protection from racism etc, but distinctive beliefs, values, practices, religion, language, in *private*. Thus immigrants and minority ethnic groups would be 'Here but Different' (Grillo 2001a). This is very close to the viewpoint adopted by the Canadian Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism of 1969, and advocates of a multicultural Australia in the 1970s: no assimilation in the traditional sense, but equal opportunity, cultural diversity, and tolerance. In general terms it has also been the keynote of policy across Europe: although British and French philosophies of integration, for

example, are often very different (Favell 1998), the reality is closer than many, in France certainly, would believe.

This kind of 'integration', which largely defined British policy over the next forty years, constitutes a particular variety, a 'weak' form, of multiculturalism. At a descriptive level all contemporary European societies are multicultural, and this is especially true of the cities. However, multicultural*ism* refers to a political project: strategies, institutions, discourses, practices, which consciously seek to address multicultural reality. 'Multiculturalism' is not a homogeneous entity. If we examine the many multicultural initiatives across Europe and beyond we may observe that they fall along a spectrum from 'weak', where cultural diversity is recognised and accepted in the private sphere, but there is a high degree of assimilation to the local population in employment, housing, education, health and welfare, with acculturation in many areas of life, to 'strong' where there is institutional recognition for cultural difference in the public sphere, with special provision in language, education, health care, welfare etc, and the organisation of representation on ethnic/cultural lines.

From the mid-1960s onwards until recently, multiculturalism in Britain and North America became progressively 'stronger' leading to fears that this might eventually turn into social, economic, cultural, religious, educational, and possibly legal and political separatism, with groups in the same city becoming like autonomous regions in a nation-state: nations within nations. One of the key sites of debate about the 'strengthening' of multiculturalism has been education. These debates have encompassed issues such as success or failure in school, the teaching of languages, religion and history, bilingual education, single-sex education, the provision of special diets to meet religious principles, the wearing of distinctive insignia (e.g. the *hijab*) and so on. In France the orthodox view has been to ban the recognition of difference from the public (state) education sector. This view is associated with France's 'republican' model of citizenship whose hegemonic status has recently been re-affirmed (see below). Britain and North America, on the other hand, have permitted, even encouraged, a significant degree of recognition within the public sector, though what that means in practice varies enormously.

Separate Lives?

It significant that it is Muslim practice and the education of Muslims which is often at issue. In the early 1990s, support in Britain for Muslim schools was voice by the self-styled 'Muslim Parliament' (an unofficial body established to represent Muslim opinion, see www.islamicthought.org/mp-intro.html) which some followers believed should pursue a strategy of separate institutions. More broadly, there were many initiatives, especially at a local level in areas of Britain with significant Muslim populations, to make mainstream schools more responsive to the needs of Muslim pupils, and/or expand the opportunities for Muslim schools within the state and private sectors (see Association of Muslim Social Scientists, 2004). Most countries, of course, permit education to be privately funded, and under those circumstances Muslim schools have been permitted in Britain for many years. There are now two in France, the most recent, the Lycée Averroes in Lille, opened in the academic year 2003-4. Encouraging (separate) private education is one way of responding to demands from within minority ethnic populations for the increasing recognition of their specific needs within the public sector. Lately, as a result of a long-running campaign, Muslim schools have also been permitted within what is called in Britain the 'voluntary-aided' sector of education in which there are schools run by the Church of England, Catholics, Jews and Methodists, and now Muslims and Sikhs, overseen by the state.

There is evidence that the desire for separate education is increasing. A recent survey in the UK found that half of Muslim families want their children to go to a Muslim school, while a quarter believed that integration had gone too far (*Guardian*, March 16, 2004). It would seem that demands for separate education have become a focus for the many difficulties Muslims feel they encounter in living according to the tenets of Islam in a society which is both Christian and secular.

The British sociologist, Harry Goulbourne, writing in 1991, described this drift to what he called the 'communal option' as 'highly dangerous', and argued that the British form of multiculturalism actually encouraged this tendency. Wider events (the Iranian Revolution, the Rushdie affair, the Gulf War, the shock

of 9/11, Afghanistan, Iraq etc), not to speak of widespread Islamophobia, have also influenced these moves towards separatism, which are not confined to Britain (see the Commission Stasi, 2003: Section 3.3.1, on 'un repli communautaire' in France). 9/11, however, is only one factor, albeit a very powerful one, in a longer-term set of processes, including the heightened global salience of Islam, especially 'Islamism' as a religious, social, and political force, the increasing public visibility of Islam in Europe since around 1975, following international (Muslim) support for the Muslim infrastructure (mosques and organisations).

In the 'strongest' versions of multiculturalism the recognition of difference is, by definition, widespread, thorough, and encompasses both private and public spheres; groups have their own institutions and are in large part responsible for their own affairs. Cities characterised by this form of multiculturalism may resemble what Furnivall called 'plural societies', a concept he developed in the 1930s and 1940s from his experience of colonialism in South East Asia. Many such dependencies were, before colonial rule, heterogeneous societies, culturally and ethnically, but under the economic, political and administrative impact of colonialism heterogeneity was transformed into cleavage. In these colonial societies there was, Furnivall argued, 'a medley of peoples'.

> 'It is in the strictest sense a medley, for they mix but do not combine. Each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways. As individuals they meet, but only in the market-place, in buying and selling. There is a plural society, with different sections of the community living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit. Even in the racial sphere there is a division of labour along racial lines' (Furnivall 1948: 304).

Such societies lacked a common consensus and 'social will'.

None of this should be taken to imply that separatism is primarily, if not exclusively, something demanded by Muslim or other similar non-Western immigrant minorities who seek the haven of ethnico-religious enclaves in which to practice their faith. Residential segregation is a world-wide phenomenon:

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consider, for example, the way in which migrants in Europe have often been 'parked' in hostels or other forms of communal or collective accommodation (e.g. multi-occupied tenements) away from the public gaze, or simply concentrated in public sector housing as in the French *banlieues*. Consider also, so-called 'gated communities'.

In the USA in the 1970s and 1980s it was common to refer to what was called 'white flight', the exodus of the middle-class white population, from the inner cities towards the suburbs. A more recent extension of this has been the withdrawal into residential areas which are gated, fenced and patrolled, and to which access by outsiders is severely restricted: 'forting up' as it has been called (e.g. in Blakely and Snyder 1997). The overriding motive for this appears to be fear and insecurity. Mike Davis commented scathingly on the 'security driven logic of enclavization' (1992: 244) in his survey of urban life in Los Angeles in the early 1990s. Since then the phenomenon has grown apace in the USA itself, in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and South Africa and so on (Low 2001, 2003; Webster 2001). In the USA, where perhaps a third of new urban developments are gated, Low (2001: 5) comments that such communities 'threaten American values of democracy, diversity, class mobility, and racial integration', adding that

> 'Whether it is kidnapping or bike snatching, Mexican laborers or "ethnic changes" the message is the same, residents are using the walls, entry gates, and guards in an effort to keep the perceived dangers outside of their homes, neighborhoods, and social world'.

Gated communities, say Blakely and Snyder (1997: 152), represent a 'concrete metaphor for the closing of the gates against immigrants and minorities and the poverty, crime, and social instabilities in society at large'.

'On the one side', said Higham (1984: xi), 'is the vision of an increasingly unified society … the symbol of the melting pot. On the other … a vision of persistent separateness … of a society that is in some basic sense pluralistic or irreconcilably divided'. Is this the future: plural cities with gated communities, doors closed to each other, no common ground between them, the state reduced to the role of watchman of the night, society lacking a common

consensus and 'social will'? Is this what multiculturalism becomes? It is this bleak prospect which in part at least lies behind an official backlash against diversity now detectable in the USA and much of Europe.

Backlash against difference?

A Return to Tradition?

> 'For a long time, the very idea that newcomers should be expected to conform in some way was anathema, and the emphasis was mainly on the need for change in the host society. However, official policy in this regard has recently begun to shift. There has been a belated recognition of the threat to national cohesion which immigration may pose, if it is not properly handled … There are also signs of a popular backlash on the issue of national identity' (Rowthorn 2003).

> 'PRINCE CHARLES WELCOMES NEW BRITISH CITIZENS. The Prince of Wales today witnessed 19 immigrants taking part in the first citizenship ceremony involving an oath of allegiance to the Queen. Prince Charles gave out certificates at the ceremony, held at Brent town hall, in north-west London, where people of 10 different nationalities were due to give a new citizenship pledge. The US-style ceremony was created by the home secretary, David Blunkett, to make getting a British passport more of an occasion. In total, 19 people, including three children, became citizens in the ceremony' (*Press Association*, 26th February, 2004).

Each of the models of diversity and its management in plural cities creates serious problems for those who try to implement them, though each attempts to address difficulties created by the others.

Assimilation seeks to impose an identity, a culture and an ethnicity, and a commitment to an orthodox, hegemonic and ultimately simplistic view of the nation-state and its ideal population which may be at odds with the reality of people's lived experience, and in any case is extremely difficult to sustain in an era of transnationalism.

Integration in the British sense, is generally a compromise and is in danger of demanding too little, in which event it may be accused of being purely symbolic or mere tokenism of the sort that in Britain is referred to, contemptuously, as 'saris, samosas, and steel bands'. For example, the idea that cultural diversity is for the domestic sphere, for the private world of the family etc., not for the public world of political relations, is something which the British political scientist Bikhu Parekh believes fundamental to the 'liberal integrationism' characteristic of British policy (1990: 64). Opposed to minority cultures being confined to the 'private realm' (1990: 67), Parekh advocates widening and deepening liberal integrationism to offer more room for diversity in the public arena: multiculturalism, he argues, 'recognizes that the good life can be led in several different ways *including* the culturally self-contained, and finds space for the latter (Parekh 2000: 172).

On the other hand, multiculturalism may be said to reify the most conservative, static and essentialised vision of 'culture', and in consequence lead to the ghetto. Alain Touraine (1997), for instance, worries that 'radical' multiculturalism, as he calls it, might lead to the creation of culturally homogenous communities and thus the destruction of the overarching multicultural order: a society of enclaves. Consequently he rejects extreme forms of communitarianism. *Separatism* may offer a shelter for and from cultural difference, but society lacks a centre and the danger is that it becomes a congery of hostile, 'back-to-back' communities, fortified 'tribes' (Etzioni 2004).

The idea that excessive multiculturalism exacerbates diversity and undermines the common will is a potent one in contemporary political thought and rhetoric in Britain and elsewhere in Europe. The ceremony described above, attended by Prince Charles in February 2004, was the first of its kind in the UK, and the product of a number of measures proposed by the then Home Secretary, David Blunkett, to enhance both the symbolic and practical significance of acquiring British citizenship. Hitherto, the act of naturalisation, perhaps surprisingly for a country like Britain, had not demanded any pomp or ritual. Now, not only would there be an oath-taking ceremony, but prospective citizens would have to undergo an English language proficiency test and an examination

of their knowledge of British society and history. These measures, initially proposed in October 2001, i.e. in the aftermath of 9/11, were defended as intended to enhance the integration of immigrants, though they seemed to reflect ideas of an earlier era, and Blunkett himself was severely criticised for suggesting, in an article on *Integration with Diversity*, that 'speaking English enables parents to converse with their children in English, as well as in their historic mother tongue, at home and to participate in wider modern culture (Blunkett 2002: 77).

In many respects, despite the support for Jenkins-style integration, this was always an influential view. Thus a Conservative Secretary of State for Education, said in 1986:

'Our schools should transmit British culture, enriched as it has been by so many traditions… It would be unnecessary… and I believe wrong, to turn our education system upside down to accommodate ethnic variety or to jettison those many features and practices which reflect what is best in our society and its institutions' (*Guardian*, 22 May 1986).

This affirmation of the 'British' tradition in education was confirmed by later legislation, principally the Education Reform Act of 1988, and the 'National Curriculum' which placed 'a standard language, a definitive canon of English literature and a single, shared narrative of the nation's history' (Donald and Rattansi 1992: 5) once again at the core of the school's endeavour. This perspective was reinforced in the mid-1990s by the government's chief adviser on the curriculum who called for the 'development of a British cultural identity in all schoolchildren, regardless of their ethnic background' (*Guardian*, 19 July 1995).

The economist, Bob Rowthorn, cited above, is correct to stress the word 'cohesion' in contemporary British discourse (see also McGhee 2003). It is a key term in the Cantle Report (2001) into disturbances in the ethnically-mixed northern cities of Britain in summer 2001 which had 'Community Cohesion' as its title. Reviewing the context in which the disturbances occurred, the Report said:

'Whilst the physical segregation of housing estates and inner city areas came as no surprise, the team was particularly struck by the depth of polarisation of our towns and cities. The extent to which these physical divisions were compounded by so many other aspects of our daily lives, was very evident. Separate educational arrangements, community and voluntary bodies, employment, places of worship, language, social and cultural networks, means that many communities operate on the basis of a series of parallel lives. These lives often do not seem to touch at any point, let alone overlap and promote any meaningful interchanges' (Section 2.1).

'Ignorance ... can easily grow into fear', it added (Section 2.2), and

'In such a climate, there has been little attempt to develop clear values which focus on what it means to be a citizen of a modern multi-racial Britain and many still look backwards to some supposedly halcyon days of a mono-cultural society, or alternatively look to their country of origin for some form of identity' (Section 2.6).

In the body of the Report, 'multiculturalism' received no mention, but, 'cohesion' is mentioned 162 times, and 'separat*' 27, and in a table outlining the 'Domains of Cohesion' pride of place goes to 'Common values and a civic culture', and 'Common aims and objectives. Common moral principles and codes of behaviour' (section 3.2). What I draw from that is that 'multicultural' signals 'difference', 'difference' signals 'separateness' and 'separateness' signals 'problems'. This point, perhaps in an extreme form, was made in an article by Minette Marin in the *Sunday Times* (29th February, 2004), writing in support of an intervention in this debate by David Goodhart (2004, see further below): 'Multiculturalism, like that other dangerous "ism", communism, is based on a mistaken idea of human nature. Multiculturalism has accentuated the differences between people, not their similarities and shared purpose'.

These are among many signs to be found in Britain as elsewhere of a backlash against diversity, and a desire to return to a more traditional vision of the relationship between nation, culture, and identity (see Brubaker 2001,

Joppke 2003). Let me reflect on this trend via readings of four recent texts. The first is a report of a *Commission de Réflexion sur l'Application du Principe de Laïcité dans la République* (Commission Stasi 2003), advising the French President on religious symbols in schools; the second is an article (Huntington 2004a) which anticipated a subsequent book (Huntington 2004b), by the controversial American political scientist and author of the *Clash of Civilizations* (Huntington 1993); the third is a book by the Italian political scientist, Giovanni Sartori (2002), and the fourth a paper by British writer, David Goodhart (2004).

France: Reaffirming and Relearning Laïcité

Although, as Favell (1998) has argued, the French philosophy of integration is different from that of Britain, and many French people would reject the idea that the country could or should be multicultural in any way, a weak form of multiculturalism has in fact characterised French practice for some decades. An illuminating example of the tensions around the subject is the long-running affair of the 'headscarves' (*hijab*) which began in 1989 and continues to this day. It has been called 'the French Rushdie affair' (Modood 1992: 261), coinciding as it did initially with the *fatwa* against the author Salman Rushdie and the debates and disturbances that that provoked in Britain and elsewhere. The original affair, it will be recalled, revolved around an incident at a school near Paris in which three young Muslim female pupils were suspended because they insisted on attending wearing the head covering which they claimed their religion required. In a discussion entitled 'Headscarves and the Enlightenment' (1992: 111-118), Silverman showed that it brought to the forefront of French politics the tension between two competing ideologies, one stressing the assimilation of immigrants and minority ethnic groups and their *insertion* into French society, and one involving greater recognition of the right to be different. Responses to the incident cut across the traditional political spectrum of left and right, creating strange alliances.

That and subsequent episodes over some fifteen years have generated a very substantial literature which I will not attempt to summarise (see especially Silverman 1992 and Hargreaves 1995 for an account of the 1989 events, Bowen 2004 for recent developments). The politics of the case were complex and multi-

layered (and continue to be). They turned on a ruling by the then Minister of Education, Lionel Jospin, later prime minister and defeated presidential candidate, who on appeal permitted the youngsters to return to school wearing their headscarves. The reaction to this decision, said Silverman, revealed that the case was interpreted in a discourse which saw it in terms of a 'binary opposition between secularism and difference' (1992: 112). Thus, many on the left, or rather many of those who stressed the secular nature of the republican tradition in general, and the secular (non- or even anti-religious) nature of the republican school in particular, supported the original suspension. Headscarves signalled religion, in this instance a religion seen as a particularly oppressive and obscurantist one (Islam), which had to be kept out of the schools at all costs. Others, while adhering to the principal of secularism, felt that to support the rejection of the children was to play into the hands of the far right *Front National*, which had based its anti-immigrant campaigns on the defence of French culture. There was also, they believed, a danger that it would create martyrs for those elements in the Muslim communities in France who would prefer separate institutions.

That was how the debate might have been summarised in the mid 1990s, and in many respects similar arguments recurred during 2003-4 (see Bowen 2004). In 2003, following initiatives by then Minister of the Interior, the politically ambitious Nicolas Sarkozy, a commission was established (Commission Stasi 2003), 'pour mener la réflexion sur l'application du principe de laïcité dans la République'. It produced a wide-ranging report which rehearsed the history of the idea of *laïcité* in French thought from the Revolution, tracing its articulation through legislation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Affirming that *laïcité* was a 'corner-stone of the Republic', it argued that:

> 'Dans la conception française, la laïcité n'est pas un simple "garde-frontière" qui se limiterait à faire respecter la séparation entre l'Etat et les cultes, entre la politique et la sphère spirituelle ou religieuse. L'Etat permet la consolidation des valeurs communes qui fondent le lien social dans notre pays' (Section 1.2.2).

Concerned at the way that demands for the recognition of difference had become increasingly vocal in schools, hospitals, the legal system and the workplace, the Commission concluded that while diversity should be respected (Section 4.1.2.3), the principle of *laïcité* in the public sphere should be re-affirmed. In particular it expressed alarm about articles (such as clothing) which are of 'un caractère ostentatoire ou revendicatif' (Section 2.2.3)[2] and might be taken as signs of identity, and recommended legislation to forbid the wearing of them in public education (Section 4.2.2.1).

The Commission reported in December 2003, and the proposals came before the French parliament in February 2004. After much discussion, notably about the precise vocabulary to employ[3], the Commission's lengthy (22,000 word) report and recommendations were reduced to a clause inserted in the education code:

'Dans les écoles, les collèges et les lycées publics, le port de signes ou tenues par lesquels les élèves manifestent ostensiblement une appartenance religieuse est interdit' (LOI n° 2004-228 du 15 mars 2004).

This amendment was accepted with wide support, though opposed by many Muslims in France and followers of Islam elsewhere in Europe, and criticised by former members of the Commission Stasi for narrowing the focus of their report.

Commenting on, and summarising, these events, Bowen (2004: 34) observed that

'the norm of public laïcité directs citizens to leave behind their ethnic and religious identities and all visible emblems of those identities and to assume the shared identity and values associated with the Republic whenever they inhabit "public space." Scholars and officials justify this norm by arguing that to proclaim publicly and loudly one's private identities is to generate division and conflict in a society'.

However, this position leads to 'ambiguity and conflict'. In practice it is very difficult to operationalise: how might it be determined that pupils 'manifestent ostensiblement une appartenance religieuse'? 'These ambiguities', added Bowen,

> 'not only present practical problems, but they also allow some non-Muslim French to express a range of beliefs, from clearly unacceptable racist attitudes to highly debatable claims about Islam's incompatibility with France, in a publicly acceptable language of laïcité'.

Shortly after the legislation was passed, the Ministry of Education in fact attempted to clarify its application in a draft circular containing the following passage:

> 'La loi ne remet pas en cause le droit des élèves de porter des signes religieux discrets, en particulier en raison de leurs dimensions. De même, les tenues traditionnelles qui marquent l'attachement de ceux qui les portent à une culture ou à une coutume vestimentaire n'entrent pas dans le champ de l'interdiction légale : la loi n'a pas pour objet d'interdire ces tenues là où elles ont été jugées jusqu'ici compatibles avec le principe de laïcité et le bon fonctionnement du service public de l'enseignement '[4].

This 'clarification' which it was argued effectively overturned the legislation attracted a storm of protest and was immediately withdrawn (see *Le Monde* and *Libération* for 21-23 April, 2004).

Although the Commission Stasi recommendations were in conformity with long-standing French republican values, it was only fifteen years after the affair first surfaced that legislation was deemed necessary, and indeed it is only (so far as I can tell) relatively recently that *laïcité* has self-consciously returned to the forefront of national concern. There was, of course, in the intervening period a major shift in the international context of Islam, and in the French national context, too, with the ongoing situation in Algeria on the one hand, and an expanding and more demanding Islamic population in France itself. It is also interesting that headscarves should excite such passion in France when similar matters had been debated and resolved with much less rancour in Britain many

years earlier. The comparison was not lost on the French, and running through the debate about the affair has been an explicit contrast between French, British, and American policies and experience in this area. Britain and America were seen as subscribing to what the French termed an 'Anglo-Saxon' conception of ethnic relations, much more pluralistic than their own.

In the self-styled French 'republican' tradition, there is a long-standing concern with ghettos, with populations closed off from French society, with 'a state within a state', something which also troubled the Commission Stasi (e.g. in its discussion of 'un repli communautaire'). The French model in theory abhors sub-national collectivities and gives primacy to the individual, and individual assimilation into the national model. French practice, however, often 'belies the universalist ideology' (Silverman 1992: 4) In the early 1980s, the Mitterand government enacted a number of measures which moved in a more pluralistic direction, for example, relaxing the Law of 1901 governing foreign clubs and societies, and introduced a limited degree of multiculturalism in education. These brought the French system closer to the British model of integration than might otherwise be thought. Moreover, in the mid-1990s the underlying issue of what kind of room should there be for those whose social, cultural, or 'racial' background is not French was debated in a much more open way (e.g. in Wieviorka 1997b and 2003). Believing that a series of crises afflicted French society involving the state and the political order, the economy, youth, and the educational system, some French scholars held that the challenge was to devise a form multiculturalism reconcilable with traditional 'republican' values.

The Commission Stasi (which included scholars such as Alain Touraine and Gilles Kepel) was well aware of these debates, and specifically pointed to the increasing respect for difference which had informed many French institutions. But the current situation it characterised as one in which, for example, claims for the recognition of difference in the workplace 'dépassent les limites du "vivre-ensemble"' (Section 3.2.3). Things had been allowed to go too far: see, for example, the Commission's discussion of the teaching of minority ethnic languages, and its recommendation to abolish the scheme for teaching languages and cultures of origin to the children of immigrant background (Section 4.1.2.2). The re-opening of the question of the veil, and the rapidity

with which in 2003-4 the French institutional system moved from idea to commission to proposal to legislation in the space of months, was a blow against the trend towards a more multicultural approach to the problem of diversity[5].

USA: The 'Hispanic Challenge'

Disquiet about the consequences of fostering diversity in the USA is, of course, nothing new (e.g. Schlesinger 1992). There has been much concern about so-called 'political correctness', and in places like Los Angeles and Miami attempts to roll back the spread of the Spanish language. Very recently, Samuel Huntington, drawing together some of these threads, has warned, in apocalyptic, indeed hysterical, and it might be argued hypocritical vein, against the 'Hispanic Challenge':

> 'The persistent inflow of Hispanic immigrants threatens to divide the United States into two peoples, two cultures, and two languages. Unlike past immigrant groups, Mexicans and other Latinos have not assimilated into mainstream U.S. culture, forming instead their own political and linguistic enclaves-from Los Angeles to Miami-and rejecting the Anglo-Protestant values that built the American dream. The United States ignores this challenge at its peril' (Huntington 2004a: 30).

Although in the past ethnic origin had been important in defining American identity, it is now a matter of 'culture and creed'. It is the creed which is the 'crucial element', and this creed was the 'product of the distinct Anglo-Protestant culture of the founding settlers'. This creed ('the English language; Christianity; religious commitment; English concepts of the rule of law, including the responsibility of rulers and the rights of individuals; and dissenting Protestant values of individualism, the work ethic, and the belief that humans have the ability and the duty to try to create a heaven on earth, a "city on a hill"') is under threat from 'doctrines of multiculturalism and diversity; the rise of group identities based on race, ethnicity, and gender over national identity; the impact of transnational cultural diasporas'.

Hispanic, specifically Mexican, immigration differs from past immigration, in Huntington's view, because of the proximity and permeability of the border, the scale of the migration (much of it illegal), the concentration of Hispanic migrants in certain regions and cities, where fertility rates are high, and the fact that much of this migration is located in areas which were historically part of Mexico itself, until seized by the USA in the Mexican-American wars of the 19th century, with the consequence that such regions 'could become the United States' Quebec'. Moreover, compared with the great diversity of immigrants in the early 20th century, now 'for the first time in U.S. history, half of those entering the United States speak a single non-English language'. The size and density of Spanish-speaking communities mean that the language is readily retained, and parents insist their children learn it at school. Consequently, 'important portions of the country become predominantly Hispanic in language and culture, and the nation as a whole becomes bilingual and bicultural'. Many identify themselves primarily as 'Hispanic' or 'Mexican', and even support the Mexican national soccer team in matches with the USA. Taking the example of Miami he wonders whether the future will witness the 'creation of a large, distinct, Spanish-speaking community with economic and political resources sufficient to sustain its Hispanic identity apart from the national identity of other Americans and also able to influence U.S. politics, government, and society'. Hence without 'improved assimilation' the end result might be a divided country: 'two languages and two cultures [with Hispanics] in the United States but not of it'.

I will not comment in detail on Huntington's paper, still less the book it anticipated. So far as language is concerned, following a long period, from the late 1960s onwards, in which legislation and court rulings gave support to bilingual education, the 1990s saw a movement to reassert the primacy of the English language. The 'English for the Children' association, for example, whose slogan is 'Let's teach English to all of America's children and end bilingual education nationwide' (see www.english4children.org/), moved and won Proposition 227 of 1998 in California which reclaimed English as 'the national public language' and withdrew support for bilingual education programmes, with further successes in Arizona and elsewhere. This support for English, in many ways reminiscent of the 'English Language First' movement of 100 years ago, is

a key feature of the backlash against diversity in the USA and elsewhere. Concerning Huntington's other arguments, I would note their culturalist nature (e.g. his reference to 'concepts of time epitomized in the mañana syndrome … attitudes toward history') and suggest that the paper reveals a narrow vision of America's 'basic creed', and betrays a lack of knowledge or serious misunderstanding about what is happening on the ground. *Inter alia* while expressing anxiety about criminality, gangs, drugs and ghettos (echoing 19th century fears of the 'dangerous classes'), he ignores how neo-liberal and neo-conservative policies have divided the USA by intensifying the way in which social and economic divisions are mapped onto racial and ethnic ones. A similar point might be made about the next two texts.

Italy: 'La Società Smembrata'?

A 'dismembered society' (*smembrata*)? This is the danger perceived by Giovanni Sartori, a distinguished Italian political scientists whose work on the theory of liberal democracy is widely cited especially in North America. Sartori, who has taught in Italy and the USA (he is emeritus professor at Columbia) was described by Hermann Tertsch in an interview in the Spanish daily *El Pais* (8 April, 2001) as 'the doyen of left liberal political science in Europe … whom much of the left abominates'. In 2000 he published a short monograph (*Pluralismo, Multiculturalismo e Estranei*) defending the idea of pluralism (as he defines it) from multiculturalists who he believes have misappropriated the term to refer to contemporary multi-ethnic societies. In a second edition (2002), published after 9/11, there is a long appendix responding to his critics in which he goes more deeply into the 'particular and particularly important problem posed by Islamic immigration'.

For Sartori, multiculturalism is antithetical to the tradition of pluralism. For him, the liberal democratic pluralism he espouses signifies an open society grounded in tolerance and consensus, wherein the domains of religion, politics, and economics, are 'adequately separated'. There may be a multiplicity of voices, parties and associations, but there is agreement to disagree, and agreement also on how differences are to be resolved; in liberal democracies this means through majority rule. Moreover, in a liberal democracy the parties and

associations which make up civil society are open, and do not represent major cleavages. There is a multiplicity of associations and of memberships, and a plethora of 'cross-cutting ties' (he uses the English term) which means that society does not consist of closed and fundamentally opposed blocs[6]. He thus identifies pluralism with the most benign form of liberal democracy, in which differences are not fundamental and can be resolved in a gentlemanly fashion in the public sphere of the coffee house (*à la* Habermas). There are no major cleavages, no place for class or gender in the analysis, or in the case of North America and elsewhere, of 'race', or other forms of ethnic (or indeed regional) differences.

This benign model of pluralism he contrasts with a multiculturalism which, although he does not make the comparison, he treats as roughly equivalent to what Furnivall and others, confusingly called a 'plural society' (see Grillo 1998 on the confusion surrounding the different usages of 'plural society'). He thus identifies multiculturalism with one of its 'strongest' forms, i.e. with societies where, to use Furnivall's formula, the constituent corporations 'mix but do not combine':

> 'To the extent that contemporary multiculturalism is aggressive, separatist and intolerant, it is the negation of pluralism. Pluralism sustains and nourishes an open society … It respects a multicultural society, but the principal aim of pluralism is to ensure peaceful relations between cultures [*pace inter-culturale*] not stir up enmity between them' (2002: 29).

Multiculturalism all too often becomes tribalism, a 'disintegrating cultural separatism', which is 'antipluralistic'. Indeed this is the dominant form of contemporary multiculturalism (57).

Whereas Sartori provides a lengthy and rigorous account of the principles underlying liberal democracy, he offers nothing like the same account of multiculturalism. Instead there is assertion and assumption, as when he attributes the passion for multiculturalism in the USA to neo-marxists and academic followers of Foucault, and to the rise of 'cultural studies'. The nearest he comes to surveying the fundamental principles is in a critique of Charles

Taylor's theory of difference recognition in which he argues that if recognition demands equal respect for all cultures because they are considered of equal value, the end result is a form of relativism which destroys the idea of value. Taylor and other multiculturalists are also taken to task for leaping too readily from the individual to the collective, individual rights being one of the cornerstones of classic liberal theory. Distinguishing between recognition and affirmative action - the latter seeks to level the playing field, equalising the grounds on which individual citizens compete, while the former emphasises and maintains separateness - Sartori argues that the politics of recognition 'ghettoises and closes off' identities. Likewise, with plural (multicultural) citizenship (*à la* Kymlicka, 1995) the open society breaks down and subdivides into closed communities.

Underlying this argument is concern about 'integration', and anxiety that 'the theory of pluralism comes up against the problem of "foreigners", people not "like us"' (10). For pluralism, Sartori argues, the good society is an integrated society. To illustrate what this means he cites various terms, homogenisation, assimilation, acculturation, incorporation etc, on the one hand, and segmentation, separation and disintegration, on the other, arguing that 'pluralistic integration' comes in the middle. Though pluralism seeks to reduce difference, assimilation is not a goal: in a plural society one may be integrated without being assimilated. Superficially this sounds like Jenkins, and to a limited degree it is, the difference becomes apparent in his discussion of immigration and above all of Muslim immigrants.

Sartori observes that currently, European societies do not know how to deal with the 'rising tide' of immigration. There is an endless demand for entry and migration flows 'besiege' Europe. Europeans 'feel invaded and are reacting'. Here, and in an article in *Corriere della Sera* (25 October, 2000) he asks, rhetorically, is their reaction racist? He replies that the reaction stems from worries about loss of jobs etc, and that the accusation of racism may itself generate a racist response. More than jobs are at stake, however. The groups who experience rejection are not East Asians or Indians. 'European xenophobia focuses on Africans and Arabs if and when they are Muslim. That is to say it is above all a cultural-religious rejection' (48). From the point of view of the

receiving society, immigration leads to a 'superabundance of diversity, an excess of alterity' (93), but there are various sources of diversity in the immigrant population (language, culture, religion, ethnic identity), some more radical than others. A politics of immigration which fails to make a distinction between varieties and degrees of difference is bound to fail.

A key issue is integrability. For integration it is not enough to dispense citizenship to all, regardless of who they are. Integration requires immigrants who are integrable and giving citizenship to the unintegrable leads to disintegration rather than integration. In a section entitled 'How diverse? How similar?' Sartori argues that too great a cultural distance is an obstacle to integration. Religions which are not 'invasive' need pose no difficulties. Different family values (as found among Asian migrants) may be of positive benefit in providing a structure in contemporary urban societies. However, essential to integration is acculturation into the political values of the West: individual liberty, democratic institutions, the separation of church and state. The difficulty of integration is increased when the immigrant belongs to a theocratic, faith-based culture which equates citizenship with religious faith. This, of course, brings us to Islam.

Muslims, he says, are the most difficult of all foreigners to integrate. One reason for this, which applies to other immigrants as well, concerns the social capital they bring (or fail to bring) to the receiving societies. The third world labour force which seeks to enter Europe is a labour force unprepared for the contemporary labour market. The bulk of American immigrants in the past were Europeans with a strong work ethic. Contemporary immigrants from Latin America, Africa and the Mediterranean basin in large measure come from 'indolent' cultures and are not 'achievement oriented' (using the English term). Poor job prospects mean they are susceptible to 'permanent unemployment'. Their children and subsequent generations will remain at the same low level of attainment as their parents, and will end up living in urban ghettos. Their economic and educational marginalization means they have 'no cultural defence' other than their faith. Thus the uprooting experienced by Muslim immigrants causes them to fall back on their only refuge: the mosque, and the development of an Islamic public sphere in Europe means that the Islam faith is better able to

exert control over believers than is the Catholic Church, which makes it very difficult for Muslims living abroad to escape the community. This ghettoization within the faith will eventually be reinforced by the development of a Muslim school system, 'warmly welcomed by the multiculturalists' (138).

Sartori sets his discussion of the 'integrability' of Muslim immigrants in the context of the contemporary development of Islam world-wide. 'For Islam', he argues, 'God is all', and asks whether it can be laicised or Westernised? Can it become tolerant? Can there be a dialogue with Christianity? His answer is 'yes, but with difficulty', because of the way that Islam is 'anchored' in the Koran, which pervades all aspects of a Muslim's life, social, cultural political. Moreover, the more open and Westernising element in Islam has for the last thirty years been in retreat whereas the rising tide is fundamentalism. 'Am I mistaken', he asks, 'in maintaining that the Muslim immigrant is, for us, the most "distant", the most "foreign" and thus the most difficult to integrate?' (127). Certainly for the immigrant change is possible; they may be 'modified' by immigration, but in what direction? In a strong passage (128) he contends:

> 'Simpletons [*sempliciotti*] assume that Muslim immigrants will inevitably be won over by the right to vote and by Western affluence. But this is simplistic. It is equally possible that the migrants' reaction will be one of rejection, that they will not share in the affluence, and that the values of Western civilisation which include the right to vote are for them non-values which they do not understand and which they refuse to accept. For those who conceive of life as ruled by the Shari'a, and submerged in the divine will, Western freedom and laicity prove to be aberrations'

The tenor of Sartori's remarks led Hermann Tertsch in *El Pais* to point out that his position on Islamic immigration came close to that of Biffi, Cardinal Archbishop of Bologna, who had called for an end to the immigration of Muslims in favour of migrants from Catholic countries, and for the closure of mosques (Grassilli 2002). Sartori replied that this was probably so, but for different reasons: his defence of the plural society was based on a secular perspective, while Biffi's argument was based on a religious one. Sartori insists that the plural society, which encourages diversity but rejects multicultural separatism is a

'recent and fragile entity' (45) and asks, 'at what point must pluralistic tolerance make room not only for "other cultures" but for "hostile cultures"' (48). In his article in *Corriere della Sera* he lists numerous demands emanating from *il Consiglio islamico d'Italia* including Muslim schools, and observes that they will soon be asking for the right to undertake polygynous marriages and circumcise women. 'Pluralism means living together in difference and with differences' (49), but membership of a pluralistic community involves giving as well as taking. Pluralism assumes intersecting social and cultural divisions and seeks to balance representativeness and governability, multiplicity and cohesion. Multiculturalism is grounded in cumulative cleavages. Its liberalism is communitarian liberalism which exacerbates the problem faced in Europe: to save the identity of the nation-state from the menace of profoundly different cultures which originate outside but which immigration has brought home[7].

Britain: 'Too Diverse?'

In early 2004, there was a debate in the columns of the British newspaper, the *Guardian*, concerning an article by David Goodhart (2004) entitled 'Too Diverse?'[8], dealing with what he called the 'progressive dilemma'. 'Is Britain becoming too diverse', he asked, 'to sustain the mutual obligations behind a good society and the welfare state?':

> 'In a developed country like Britain … we not only live among stranger citizens but we must share with them. We share public services and parts of our income in the welfare state, we share public spaces in towns and cities where we are squashed together on buses, trains and tubes, and we share in a democratic conversation - filtered by the media - about the collective choices we wish to make. All such acts of sharing are more smoothly and generously negotiated if we can take for granted a limited set of common values and assumptions. But as Britain becomes more diverse that common culture is being eroded'.

Thus 'sharing and solidarity can conflict with diversity', and 'negotiating the tension' between them 'is at the heart of politics'.

Diversity, in his account, largely stems from immigration (as his critics pointed out, like Sartori he says little or nothing about regional or class diversity). 'Immigrants come in all shapes and sizes', he argues, 'from the American banker or Indian software engineer to the Somali asylum seeker - from the most desirable to the most burdensome'. Those from the same place tend to 'congregate together', and public policy should 'try to prevent that consolidating into segregation across all the main areas of life: residence, school, workplace, church'. In any event, he goes on

> 'the laissez-faire approach of the postwar period in which ethnic minority citizens were not encouraged to join the common culture (although many did) should be buried. Citizenship ceremonies, language lessons and the mentoring of new citizens should help to create a British version of the old US melting pot. This third way on identity can be distinguished from the coercive assimilationism of the nationalist right, which rejects any element of foreign culture, and from multiculturalism, which rejects a common culture'.

Against the arguments of multiculturalists, Goodhart asserts that culture and the media should stress a 'single national conversation', while in education 'the teaching of British history, and in particular the history of the empire and of subsequent immigration into Britain' should figure centrally in the curriculum. 'Newcomers', he says, 'can and should adopt the history of their new country as well as, over time, contributing to it - moving from immigrant "them" to citizen "us." Helpfully', he adds, 'Britain's story includes, through empire, the story of many of our immigrant groups - empire soldiers, for example, fought in many of the wars that created modern Britain'.

Goodhart contrasts two perspectives: 'the traditional conservative Burkean view … that our affinities ripple out from our families and localities, to the nation and not very far beyond', and 'a liberal universalist one which sees us in some sense equally obligated to all human beings from Bolton to Burundi'. His sympathies are clearly with the former: 'The nation state remains irreplaceable as the site for democratic participation, and although 'critics have argued that

this idea of national community is anachronistic - swept away by globalisation, individualism and migration - it still has political resonance'.

I will not discuss Goodhart's ethological and psychological assumptions[9], nor the arguments for and against his position voiced by supporters, critics and commentators who included many prominent authorities in political sociology. A popular response was represented by the journalist, Peter Hitchens (*Guardian*, February 26th, 2004):

> 'Great thanks are due to David Goodhart … for grasping that a country cannot long retain consent, freedom and order unless it defends and respects its own culture … National culture defines the nation, the largest unit in which it is possible for human beings to be effectively unselfish. Patriotism, to be distinguished from aggressive nationalism, is an unselfish emotion … Immigrants arriving here surely have a duty to become part of the culture that they have chosen to enter, so that its benefits can continue for their own children and grandchildren … Multiculturalism, far from promoting peaceful racial integration in a shared society, actively works to prevent it. To insist on cultural integration is the exact opposite of racialism, and the ludicrous smearing of cultural conservatives as "racists" by so many on the left is not just wicked but also witless, ignorant gibberish'.

Why the backlash?

> 'No reasonable person wants an unbridled multiculturalism' (Wieviorka 1997a: 7).

The attack on diversity comes from many sources. There is, for example, widespread rejection of multiculturalism on both the extreme right and among mainstream commentators and practitioners because of concerns about ghettoisation, communal separatism and exclusion; recently (April 2004), Trevor Phillips, chair of the British Commission for Racial Equality, gave his support to that view. Alongside academic objections (ably summarised by Nederveen Pieterse, 2003, and Werbner, 2003), and sometimes feeding off them (e.g. in

Scandinavia, Wikan 2002; Eriksen 2003), are popular and political objections which stress the need to reassert 'core values' (as in UK debates about the English language and what it means to be British). These values are typically those associated with Christian, Western, European liberalism, and again typically contrasted with those thought representative of Islamism: segregation and suppression of women (veiling), forced/arranged marriages, female circumcision, separate education, the power of religious as opposed to secular authorities. There is also widespread opposition to immigrants and asylum-seekers, especially _but not only_ on the extreme right, accompanied by demands that migrants declare their loyalty to the nation-state in which they reside, rather than the one whence they came, with which many retain significant ties, or transnational entities such as the _Umma_, the nation of Islam.

Explicitly or implicitly, authors like those discussed above, are responding to the consequences of globalisation and transnationalism, and the attendant 'porosity' of cities and societies which has made them more diverse and threatened core values [10]. All are addressing the resultant 'problems' of diversity (the dilemmas of 'solidarity vs. diversity' etc), with greater or lesser degrees of hostility. All seek to reassert and recover common ground rooted in the nation, the nation-state, and their respective understandings of national core values - what it means to be American, British or French, and specifically American, British or French citizens. In the case of France, this means returning to Year Zero. The serious and controversial questioning of the meaning of Britishness in the Parekh Report (2000) on _The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain_, which had such a hostile reception (see Grillo 2003, Fortier 2005; Robert Winder later dismissed it as 'clinging to the idea of "multiculturalism"', 2004: 365) makes it seem exceptional in this and in other ways.

Writers, and political parties, in the mainstream are also responding to popular anxieties amongst the majority (i.e. 'white') populations about the erosion of the society's traditional values and the presumed 'threat' represented by immigrants and ethnic and religious minorities. The mainstream backlash against diversity is expressed partly as fear of an even greater backlash by a disaffected, anxious and xenophobic electorate, mobilised by populist parties of the extreme right. Above all, all are reacting to the increasing Islamic presence,

e.g. in Western Europe. This reaction frequently takes the form an implicit, sometimes explicit, Islamophobia, especially noticeable since 9/11, though Islamophobia was not, of course, a creation of 9/11.

The Messy Middle Ground?

To say 'backlash against diversity', however, tars all with the same brush; in some cases it may be unfair, in others too generous. There is, in fact, a continuum of responses to the question what to do about diversity ranging from outright assimilationists to outright separatists (Figure 1).

Assimilation <> Weak Multiculturalism <> Strong Multiculturalism <> Separatism

Figure 1. The Diversity Continuum

The Commission Stasi, Huntington, Goodhart, and Sartori are comfortably on the left of this continuum. So too are the Cantle Report (2001) and the UK Government's White Paper (2002) *Secure Borders, Safe Haven*, which led to a new Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act (2002) where 'multiculturalism' virtually disappeared. On the other hand, the Parekh Report is equally comfortably towards the opposite end, though stopping short of separatism.

Parekh aside, however, there seems general agreement that 'enough is enough'; no one wants 'unbridled' or 'unbounded' diversity. The drift to too much multiculturalism should be halted, though they call 'stop!' at different points. In other cases the positioning is less clear cut. Earlier, I said of actors in contemporary plural societies that some may have a clear-cut project, but others will be sifting through the various options, uncertain about what to do for the best, and I sense this is often the case with some other interventions in this arena, for example the Crick Report (*The New and the Old*, 2003), of a working party established in September 2002 to seek ways of implementing policies already settled by the new Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act.

Inter alia, this Act required UK residents seeking citizenship to be

'tested to show "a sufficient knowledge of English, Welsh or Scottish Gaelic", to have "a sufficient knowledge about life in the United Kingdom" and to take a citizenship oath and a pledge at a civic ceremony' (Summarised in Crick Report, Section 1.1).

The committee saw their work contributing to government policy in five areas: 'A wider citizenship agenda'; 'Enhancing the significance of British citizenship'; 'Encouraging community cohesion' (following the Cantle Report), but also 'Valuing diversity', and 'Creating a greater sense of mutual respect, support and belonging' (section 1.2). It can be seen, therefore, that the report is very much part of the current debate around diversity and solidarity. The detailed recommendations are beyond the scope of this paper, but I will comment briefly on its aims and assumptions (Section 2).

'Becoming a citizen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland should be no ordinary matter: it is a significant life event', they argue (the phrase comes from a speech by the Home Secretary in 2002, and is also repeated in the 2002 White Paper), and immigrants should be encouraged to become citizens. If they do, they are joining a multicultural society,

> 'one made up of a diverse range of cultures and identities, and one that emphasises the need for a continuous process of mutual engagement and learning about each other with respect, understanding and tolerance - whether in social, cultural, educational, professional, political or legal spheres. Such societies, under a framework of common civic values and common legal and political institutions, not only understand and tolerate diversities of identity but should also respect and take pride in them' (Section 2.6).

Additionally (Section 2.7), to be British means to

> 'respect the laws, the elected parliamentary and democratic political structures, traditional values of mutual tolerance, respect for equal rights and mutual concern; and [to] give our allegiance to the state (as commonly symbolised in the Crown) in return for its protection. To be

British is to respect those over-arching specific institutions, values, beliefs and traditions that bind us all, the different nations and cultures, together in peace and in a legal order'

But (Section 2.8), it does not mean 'assimilation into a common culture so that original identities are lost', nonetheless, there must be commonalities, and here, once again, is the importance of language:

'Use of the English language itself is possibly the most important means of diverse communities participating in a common culture with key values in common. There is also the fact that people need some level of English for the crucial matter of basic employment as well as for everyday life. Immigrants may choose to work other than in an English-speaking situation, but they should not feel trapped in it by reason of not having English. But even so, large areas of Wales and some parts of Scotland furnish clear examples that bilingual cultures are not inherent threats to the unity of the state and to the integration of diverse communities, old and new. Speaking mainly one language in the home and mainly another at work has not threatened the integration of either state or society. But if some in the home cannot speak any English, that is plainly to their great disadvantage, unless very old or infirm'. (Section 2.9).

They end this discussion by stating that by 'integration' they intend

'neither assimilation nor a society composed of, as it were, separate enclaves, whether voluntary or involuntary. Integration means not simply mutual respect and tolerance between different groups but continual interaction, engagement and civic participation, whether in social, cultural, educational, professional, political or legal spheres. The basis of good citizenship is how we behave towards each other collectively and that is what binds us together, rather than assertions of national, ethnic or religious priorities or particular interpretations of history (Section 2.10).

It is not surprising, therefore, especially given the composition of the working party, that they conclude by quoting with approval Roy Jenkins'

statement of 1966, and generally their Report is much more conciliatory in tone than some of the statements from the Home Secretary himself, though certainly not as strongly 'multicultural', as the Parekh Report. However, just as the French government extracted only a tiny element of the Commission Stasi, the British government responded only to those parts of the Crick Report that dealt with the value of citizenship ceremonies and the importance of learning English.

Goodhart's contrast between 'coercive assimilationism' and the multiculturalism 'which rejects a common culture' is also a cornerstone of a US initiative, with global aspirations, led by Amitai Etzioni, who also contributed to the debate following on Goodhart' *Prospect Magazine* article (Etzioni 2004). Since 2001 Etzioni has been involved with the production of a statement, 'The Diversity Within Unity [DWU] Platform' promoted by the 'Communitarian Network' (see www.gwu.edu/~ccps/DWU_Platform.pdf). The Platform, which has had wide circulation and gained many endorsements from across the world (including Spain and Italy), begins somewhat portentously:

> 'We, the endorsers of the Diversity Within Unity Position Paper, have come together from many different social backgrounds, countries, and viewpoints to address our fellow citizens about the place of immigrants, and more generally minorities, in our diversifying societies'.

Their starting point is the widespread concern that many people express about mass immigration, and the way that this is sometimes given violent expression (something that also troubles Goodhart, Huntington, and Sartori). However,

> 'To throw the feelings of many millions of people in their faces, calling them "discriminatory," "exclusionary," "hypocritical," and worse, is an easy politics, but not one truly committed to resolution. People's anxieties and concerns should not be dismissed out of hand, nor can they be effectively treated by labeling them racist or xenophobic… The challenge before us is to find legitimate and empirically sound ways to constructively address these concerns'.

In reviewing the options they contrast assimilation and 'unbounded multiculturalism' ('unbounded' is a frequently recurring trope). The first is repressive, difficult to implement and unnecessary. The second is 'normatively unjustified' and likely to lead to a 'backlash' (another constantly used term). They therefore turn to DWU which

> 'presumes that all members of a given society will fully respect and adhere to those basic values and institutions that are considered part of the basic shared framework of the society. At the same time, every group in society is free to maintain its distinct subculture - those policies, habits, and institutions that do not conflict with the shared core - and a strong measure of loyalty to its country of origin, as long as this does not trump loyalty to the society in which it lives if these loyalties come into conflict. Respect for the whole and respect for all is at the essence of our position'.

The Platform then spells out the consequence of adopting this position for the rights and obligations of citizenship, for dual citizenship, for the role of religion (remove it from the public sphere), for schooling, and for language. Concerning schooling, the Platform opposes both an assimilationist model, and a 'segregated, unbounded multiculturalist one': 'Schooling should neither be used to suppress all cultural differences and distinctions, nor to reinforce the segregation and ghettoization of minorities'. The DWU approach emphasises the importance of a common basis to the school curriculum for all, but within certain limites: '85 percent or more-should remain universal', thus allowing 15% for diversity. On language they again reject the assimilationist emphasis on learning the dominant language, as well as 'unbounded diversity's' opposition to accepting a single tongue. The DWU approach, they say, 'recognizes the strong advantages of having one shared language (two if necessary) and teaching it to all immigrants, minority members, and people whose education is lagging for other reasons'.

'The challenge for the DWU model', the Platform concludes, 'is to ask how the realm of unity, however restated, can be thick enough without violating the legitimate place of diversity'. This question is very similar to Goodhart's, and both stress that they are somewhere in the messy middle of the integration

spectrum between assimilation and separation, though detailed examination would show that they end up at slightly different points: Goodhart closer to assimilation, DWU a little further away - that 15% is telling. As we say, the devil is in the detail.

See the Appendix for observations about the way in which the debate in Britain developed during 2004-5.

The city as the site of mixity

A complex diversity

In many respects there is little is radically new in these interventions. They are all re-assertions of well-established viewpoints and show great continuity with the past. Diversity is a much more complex and dynamic phenomenon than most imagine, though this does not make it easier to manage. Fundamental to their conservatism is a certain perspective on culture. Leaving aside what may be described as their 'culturalist' (at times racist) stance on other peoples, they share an understanding of 'culture' as a defining property of human groups and the individuals who belong to them, which is static and essentialist, and takes little account of processes of cultural change engendered by globalisation and transnationalism. Compare and contrast the following take on Barcelona by the anthropologist Manuel Delgado:

> 'The idea of humanity in a mosaic – confined to watertight compartments which touch each other without overlapping and which everyone lives enclosed in his or her difference –this is fiction in the streets of a city [Barcelona] which exists in a kaleidoscope – that is, in which configurations move as nebulous masses … convulsing and changing, intersecting each other without rest and place … a society in which any reduction to a unity – culture, ethnicity, language, religion – can only be experienced as a temporary illusion which the reality will never confirm … a live expression of a plurality in movement' (Manuel Delgado in *El Pais*, 23 July 1998, cited in Grassilli 2002: 118. Her translation).

To be fair, the Parekh Report certainly and the Crick Report to some degree (e.g Section 2.6), reveal a much more sophisticated understanding of culture than most (see the exchange between Crick and Parekh , *Guardian*, 12/16 April 2004). Israel Zangwill's version of the American 'melting pot' (1914: 33), as a cauldron '*where all the races of Europe are melting and reforming*' in fact has a much more complex vision of actual social and cultural change than is represented in many contemporary accounts. This may be illustrated if I turn now to the fourth, contrasting vision of the plural city, which following current French usage, I will call *mixité*, 'mixity' (see further Grillo 2005b).

New transethnic identities?

In preliminary accounts of minority ethnicity in Britain, in the 1960s and 1970s, it was common to speak of people, especially youngsters, as 'between two cultures' (e.g. Watson 1977). As Back has observed (2002: 441) such studies saw youth as 'locked in a vice-like grip between two incommensurable cultural blocks'. From the 1980s onwards, however, a much more complex picture appeared: in streets and playgrounds there was a greater degree of mixity than previously supposed. Even though face to face contact may have been confined to certain contexts (especially schools), and certain age ranges, culturally and linguistically there was a strong element of 'mixing and combining', to echo Furnivall. Studies by Hewitt (1986), Jones (1988), Rampton (1995), Baumann (1996), and Back (1996), have shown, for example, that the language and gestures of the street-wise Afro-Caribbean (along with Reggae and Rap music) became powerful icons for many young white and Asian Britons, at least up to a certain point in their lives. Thus, as Hewitt puts it (1986: 47), 'they … appropriate some of the blazonry of black youth style', using elements of Afro-Caribbean Creole, African American speech, and the South London black vernacular.

Rampton (1995) offers further evidence for what he calls 'language crossing': the use of elements from Creole, South Asian languages or 'stylised Indian English' by those who would not normally speak those languages. Language-crossing (like language/code switching) is therefore part of the

multicultural community's linguistic or rhetorical repertoire. Evidence from France suggests something similar. An interesting collection (Aitsiselmi ed. 2000) examines 'le langage des banlieues' with its use of mixed linguistic forms and neologisms, drawing on verlan, argot and Arabic, Berber, Creole, Romany, African languages, and employing code-switching, and, although the term is not used, 'language-crossing', as defined by Rampton. Linguistic creativity, inventiveness and playfulness are emphasised. Sometimes, in both France and the Britain, there is a tendency to celebrate these new forms of transethnic identity, as in the following:

> 'Perhaps there is another nation being formed for the future beyond the boundaries of race. If that nation can't yet be visualised, then it can perhaps be heard in the rhythms of the airwaves, in the beat that binds together histories, cultures, new identities' (Hebdige 1987: 158) .

Such celebration is premature: such identities are steeped in the language of gender and 'racial' difference, and by no means preclude xenophobia. But what are the implications of these dynamic cultural transformations for the governance of the plural, ethnically heterogeneous, city under conditions of globalisation and mass transnational migration?

Conclusion: intercultural dialogue

The contemporary postmodern city, argues Soja, is a 'Fractal City':

> 'fragmented and polarized, but also the scene of creative new "hybridities" and a cultural politics aimed not just at reducing inequalities but also preserving difference and fostering flexible "transversal" identities' (Soja 2000: 155),

This makes mixity seem like a neoliberal version of social and cultural relations with 'structure' the emergent property of the choices that people make. I would rather emphasise that in the 'postmetropolis' mixity is a negotiated order

(Strauss 1978). As Back argues, through negotiation 'in the context of ... friendship patterns young white and black people construct an alternative public sphere in which truly mixed ethnicities develop' (1996: 158). They are producing 'syncretic cultures', which are 'neither simply black nor simply white. These syncretic cultures produce inter-racial harmony while celebrating diversity ... and result in volatile cultural forms that can be simultaneously black and white' (1996: 159). In those sites (schools, playgrounds, mixed marriages) wherein hybridity is produced we find a multiplicity of voices, languages, dialects, registers. Actors are in dialogue with one another, responding, joking, playing, crossing, mixing, and engaging in negotiations through which new orders emerge, and certainly not always harmoniously.

In the light of this, what can we say about the governance of diversity? Many institutions at the national and local level play a part, from schooling to the economy, to the electoral system, though as the feminist movement taught us long ago, the personal is also the political, the political is inscribed in the personal, and the management of diversity must deal with that, too. At this point the importance of 'intercultural dialogue' needs to be stressed.

Touraine rejects extreme forms of communitarianism because they destroy the centre. Multiculturalism, he argues, makes no sense unless it is defined as a combination of social unity and cultural diversity. He goes on:

> 'It is not the separation of cultures or the isolation of subcultures which makes a multicultural society, it is their intercommunication, hence the need for a common language which will allow coming to terms with each other while recognising differences' (Touraine 1997: 301).

Parekh agrees. A multicultural society needs to 'foster a strong sense of unity', but 'cannot ignore the demands of diversity' (Parekh 2000: 196). It requires a 'common sense of belonging' (Parekh 2000: 341), but this means more than a simple shared, pragmatic, commitment to a political and economic association of mutual benefit. For Parekh, common ground is an emergent phenomenon, based on what he calls an 'interculturally created and multiculturally constituted common culture', which 'can emerge and enjoy legitimacy only if all the

constituent cultures are able to participate in its creation in a climate of equality'
(Parekh 2000: 221). This is what he calls a 'dialogically constituted multicultural
society' (*ibid*)., involving intercultural interaction in both private and public
realms. Deriving a (minimalist) 'universal moral consensus ... through a universal
or cross-cultural dialogue', says Parekh (2000: 128), it is 'possible to arrive at a
body of moral values which deserve the respect of all human beings' (Parekh
2000: 133).

Parekh, Touraine and others converge on 'interculturalism'[11] and
'dialogue'. What emerges, optimistically and idealistically, is the idea of a
multicultural society, constituted politically through a specific form of, probably
'weak', multiculturalism embodied in a non-essentialist way in institutions and
practices operating locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, and through
individual and collective engagement in intercultural dialogue. 'Intercultural
dialogue' thus has an important role in mixity's negotiating process. A *sine qua
non* is a presumption of tolerance and of assumption of the possibility and value
of dialogue, but these must be supported by mechanisms which would assist in
the processes of negotiation, helping people determine what the boundaries are,
and perhaps above all a conducive public culture and civic consciousness. This is
easy to say, but in practice extremely difficult to achieve. How can we foster
individual and collective engagement in intercultural dialogue, and above all get
beyond deeply engrained defensive barriers between cultures?

The same question is posed by the well-meaning sentiments expressed
in 'Agenda 21 for Culture' whose 'Principles', 'Undertakings' and
'Recommendations' were approved in Barcelona in 2004 (see
www.agenda21cultura.net/agenda21/english/default.htm). Starting from
Principle 1 *'Cultural diversity is the main heritage of humanity'*, it goes on to
argue (Principle 7):

> 'Cities and local spaces are a privileged setting for cultural invention which
> is in constant evolution, and provide the environment for creative
> diversity, where encounters amongst everything that is different and
> distinct (origins, visions, ages, genders, ethnic groups and social classes)
> are what makes full human development possible. Dialogue between

identity and diversity, individual and group, is a vital tool for guaranteeing both a planetary cultural citizenship as well as the survival of linguistic diversity and the development of cultures'.

The signatories of the declaration also agree (Undertaking 21):

'To open up spaces for dialogue between different spiritual and religious choices living side by side in the local area, and between these groups and the public authorities to ensure the right to free speech and harmonious coexistence'.

Yet, the question of when, where, and above all, how, is hardly addressed.

Multiculturalism (for example, multicultural education) often fails because either it represents a very superficial and stereotyped vision of culture and cultural difference or essentialises or reifies it: it may be worse than nothing. (For a sophisticated and nuanced discussion of the representation of diversity and multicultural practice in Barcelona which illustrates this, see Grassilli, 2002). Another tried and tested methodology, which again may be worse than nothing, is so-called 'anti-racist training'. All too often such training is grounded in the assumption that the world is divided into two kinds of people, racists and victims of racism, with the latter invariably people of colour, the former invariably white. This, of course, comes dangerously close to racism itself, and the implication - white=racist – is deeply resented by many subjected to such courses. Indeed the training may actually deepen hostilities. Nonetheless, the intention, there and in multicultural education, to address consciously or unconsciously held beliefs which permeate everyday attitudes and practices, is a very important one. That this is necessary has been shown time and again over the last decade, not least by the Macpherson Report (1999) which uncovered, and obliged London's Metropolitan Police force to admit the existence of a racist 'canteen culture' woven into the fabric of the 'job'.

Approaches which involve among other things the exchange of life histories and personal narratives are promising avenues to explore. It might also be fruitful to couple the aims and some of the devices that have emerged from anti-racist training with the participatory methodologies that have been widely

employed in the development field and which are intended to establish common ground, from the bottom up. Despite their many drawbacks, they are surprisingly good at identifying common ground.

It must be admitted that the labour involved in these methodologies is intensive, requiring a great deal of work (mental and emotional) by participants. It is hard to see how the effort required to foster intercultural dialogue between a class of a dozen or so young people or a small group of villagers squatting under the baobab tree (a common setting envisaged for participatory dialogues in development) can be translated into a community-wide initiative across three million people in a city such as Barcelona, let alone in wider national or global arenas.

However, one thing need not preclude another. The problems are multi-level and solutions must be multi-level and multifaceted too, coming at the issues in many different ways, from many different angles, simultaneously. The strategic aim is an egalitarian form of weak multiculturalism which recognises difference and defends the right to be different in the private sphere, inviting it into the public sphere only when all parties concerned agree that it should become part of what Parekh calls the 'interculturally created and multiculturally constituted common culture'; a new order which emerges through negotiation and dialogue.

Despite all the difficulties, the future belongs to non-essentialist forms of egalitarian multiculturalism which reflect the reality of mixity, and to intercultural dialogue which will make it happen. In a civilised society there is no alternative, and we have to make it work.

Appendix: Developments in the UK, 2004-5

This is an addendum to the section entitled *'The Messy Middle Ground?'*, and deals with the ongoing debate in Britain in 2004-5, when things moved on, or at any rate became more complicated, with a shift towards a more nuanced view of the relationship between diversity and cohesion. This was signalled with the publication of a Home Office Consultation Document (2004) with the slightly Orwellian title 'Strength in Diversity'. It is possible that the previously published Crick Report (2003), from a working party established in September 2002 to seek ways of implementing changes relating to admission to British citizenship outlined in the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act (2002), was influential in this, though it is also possible that elements within the Home Office were instrumental in (partially) re-asserting a long-standing policy.

The working party, chaired by the Home Secretary's old university mentor, and incidentally expert on Orwell, Prof. Sir Bernard Crick (see Blunkett 2004), had set out what it meant to be British (Section 2.7) emphasising the importance of 'respect [for] those over-arching specific institutions, values, beliefs and traditions that bind us all, the different nations and cultures, together in peace and in a legal order', and that 'diversities of practice must adhere to these legal frameworks'. At the same time (Section 2.8) 'to be British does not mean assimilation into a common culture so that original identities are lost', and as this phrasing suggests it might, the Report goes on to quote with approval the Jenkins Formula (Section 2.9), adding (Section 2.10) that their understanding of 'integration' means 'neither assimilation nor a society composed of, as it were, separate enclaves, whether voluntary or involuntary', and further that it involves 'not simply mutual respect and tolerance between different groups but continual interaction, engagement and civic participation, whether in social, cultural, educational, professional, political or legal spheres'.

'Strength in Diversity' cites the Crick Report approvingly (in Section 2.2) and uses very similar language (see also Blunkett 2004), e.g.

'Integration in Britain is not about assimilation into a single homogenous culture, it is a two way process with responsibilities on both new arrivals and established communities. Integration is also about more than how we respond to new arrivals, it means ensuring that ethnic, religious or cultural differences do not define people's life chances and that people with different backgrounds work together to build a shared future' (Section 1.6)

'There is space within the concept of "British" for people to express their religious and cultural beliefs. We see this in practice in the sensitisation of public services to accommodate different expressions of identity or belief, for example the adaptation of uniforms in schools and key public services, like the police, to include Muslim hijabs and Sikh turbans' (Section 2.5).

'Respect for diversity must take place within a framework of rights and responsibilities that are recognised by and apply to all - to abide by the law, to reject extremism and intolerance and make a positive contribution to UK society. Different ways of living our lives, different cultures or beliefs all coexist within this shared framework of rights and responsibilities' (Section 2.6).

As its title implies, the 2004 Consultation Document sees diversity as positive. It is to be celebrated; it brings many benefits. Different languages spoken, different music appreciated, different food eaten, different clothes worn may be a 'source of rich cultural interactions' (Section 1.8, see also Section 5.1). On the other hand, and here the Consultation Document follows Cantle, Crick and other predecessors, diversity may lead to 'segregation [which] has led to fear and conflict, which has been exacerbated by political extremists who capitalise on insecurities to promote their own narrow objectives' (Section 1.8, see also Section 5.1). Diversity is strength so long as it does not leave people living 'parallel lives', as the Cantle Report (2001: Section 2.1) put it, and thus undermine cohesion.

Diversity is a good thing, therefore, so long as it co-exists with common values. In a speech referring to the Consultation Document (Blunkett 2004), the Home Secretary said:

> 'Young people in particular will often express their identities by reference to their cultural preferences, the music they like or the clothes they wear. We have no intention of banning the expression of identity through religious symbols in public institutions like schools, as they have in France … As Education Secretary, I was proud to allow equal entry of Muslim schools into the state system as with schools for other faiths and denominations'.

He added 'this is about balancing rights and responsibilities'.

Common values must also be reinforced by mutual engagement. One of the problems identified by Cantle and other reports on the disturbances in the Northern cities was 'lack of interaction between individuals of different cultural, religious and racial backgrounds in society' (www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/cohesion/index.html). 'Fostering understanding and respect between different faiths is vital in practically implementing community cohesion strategies' (*ibid.*) There is a need to develop inter-communal solidarity by creating 'cross-cutting ties', as anthropologists have called them (Blunkett 2004 and the Final Report of the Community Cohesion Panel 2004 tend to put this in the language of 'social capital', a contemporary buzz-word in Whitehall). 'Faith communities' and their leaders have an important part to play in this (Consultation Document 2004: Section 2.5, see also Final Report of the Community Cohesion Panel 2004). Faith communities, says the Panel, might contribute to community cohesion because of their 'in-depth knowledge and understanding of local neighbourhoods, their histories and the issues that are important to them', their central place in social networks and their ability to 'create social capital by binding people together in particular locations and developing local leadership and the capacity to organise'; they may also 'promote values and virtues that are necessary for cohesive communities - neighbourliness, care for the weak, civility and mutual respect, honest dealing' (p. 32). Note that here Cantle (and elsewhere others)

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are seeking to promote what Parekh, for example, might want to call 'intercultural dialogue', though in this case that dialogue is envisaged as the exchange of knowledge between practitioners of different faiths, residing in discrete cultural blocks.

In sum, then, diversity 'Yes', difference 'No' and the risk is that the celebration of diversity may encourage difference - segregation, parallel lives, conflict - and one of the principal objections to multiculturalism is that it does just that. Once again it should be noted that the term is absent from the Home Office vocabulary (e.g. from the Consultation Document, from Blunkett 2004, and indeed from Crick 2003). In the light of that though it is absent from the original Cantle Report, it is interesting to note that it does re-surface in the Final Report. There it is used ambiguously: as the fact of a diverse society on the one hand, and as a specific form of governance of that diversity: 'we need a type of multi-culturalism in which everyone supports the values and laws of the nation, whilst keeping hold of their cultural identity' (p. 8). This represents the 'British model' which is 'widely respected throughout the world and by the minority communities who have settled here' (p. 9), and it is one which Cantle himself wishes to see maintained (in *Guardian*, 11 August 2004.) [Note also that the Final Report (whose conclusions are welcomed in somewhat lukewarm terms - 'a useful contribution' - in a 'Foreword' by the responsible minister) is worried that that its advice has 'has not yet been sufficiently well promulgated' (p. 12), and argues that 'the Government needs to adopt a much bolder approach to instil a greater sense of pride in our multicultural nation' (p. 13)].

The government's response to the 'Strength in Diversity' consultation was published in January 2005 (Home Office, 2005) under the title *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society: The Government's Strategy to Increase Race Equality and Community Cohesion*. It sought to 'improve the life chances' (e.g. in education and employment) of those of minority ethnic background and reduce inequalities. This would 'help people from all backgrounds to come together and develop a sense of inclusion and shared British identity … promoting a sense of common belonging and cohesion among all groups, setting out a vision for an inclusive British society in which young people from different communities grow up with a sense of common belonging' (p. 9).

Endnotes

(1) This is a revised version of a paper originally presented to a symposium on 'The Discontents of Cultural Identities in a Diverse World', at Interacció 2004, in Barcelona (see www.barcelona2004.org/eng/eventos/ dialogos/docs/interaccionfeng2.pdf/), and later at the universities of Bergamo and Oxford. A further revised and much shorter version was presented at a COMPAS/ISCA seminar at Oxford in April 2005. It is one of series concerned with the 'backlash against difference' in contemporary Europe: see *inter alia* Grillo 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c. Although the papers address a common overarching theme, they are different and differently focused. There is, however, some overlap, with topics discussed in passing in one developed at greater length in another, as in the present paper.

(2)　　'Ostentatiously [or provocatively] demanding recognition [as a Muslim]' perhaps conveys the sentiment expressed

(3)　　Legislators debated whether the appropriate adjective should be *ostentatoire*, *ostensible*, or *visible* before settling on the adverb *ostensiblement*. As one deputy put it: 'Ce débat, chers collègues, n'est pas que sémantique. Il est politique et, accessoirement, juridique' (Deuxième séance du mardi 10 février 2004).

(4)　　'La circulaire d'application de la loi sur la laïcité, texte provisoire', via www.liberation.fr/documents/Liberation_circul_laicite.doc/

(5)　　The Affair did not, of course, end with the passage of legislation but continued into the school year 2004-5 with a number of suspensions of students for failing to comply with the law. This affected not only young Muslim women, but others such as young Sikh boys whose right to wear the turban in school is widely recognised in other countries. See *inter alia* www.prohijab.net/

(6)　　Where there are blocs, coinciding with religious, ethnic or linguistic membership, 'peace and social coexistence may be assured by consociative elites' (36), resolving their differences through negotiation, as in the Netherlands. (The Dutch system of 'pillarisation' is often cited as a model).

(7)　　In March 2004, Sartori spoke on 'Immigration: A Problem for Democracy in Western Europe? The Issue of Cultural Incompatibility', at a conference on 'Living the City Together', organised by the Municipality of Bologna, at the time controlled by the

centre-right (see www.comune.bologna.it/cittadino/ docs/convivere/progr-inglese.pdf/). This followed the Council's policy document, published the previous year (Comune di Bologna 2003) which sought to define the rights and duties of immigrants, with an emphasis on the latter

(8)   Goodhart (2004), originally published in *Prospect Magazine*, was reprinted in the *Guardian*, 24 February 2004, as 'Discomfort of Strangers'.

(9)   'Humans are social, group-based primates with constraints, however imprecise, on their willingness to share'; 'Feelings of suspicion and hostility towards outsiders are latent in most of us'; 'People will always favour their own families and communities'.

(10)   Speeches by eminent Christian leaders (e.g. the former Archbishop of Canterbury on 'Christianity and Islam: Collision or Convergence', Rome, March 2004), may also be seen in this context.

(11)   See Sartori 2002: 112 'Il multiculturalismo porta alla Bosnia e alla balcanizzazione; è l'interculturalismo che porta all'Europe'

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